

Washington, D.C. - The federal government faces an unprecedented workforce crisis that threatens to undermine its ability to meet the needs of the country, warned two senior congressmen today. U.S. Reps. David Price (D-NC) and Christopher Shays (R-CT) will introduce legislation today to address this impending shortage of talented professionals by awarding graduate-level scholarships for students who commit to public service.

Approximately one third of the government's top scientists, engineers, physicians, mathematicians, economists, and other highly specialized professionals will be retiring in the next five years, according to the federal Office of Personnel Management. And [a recent study by the Partnership for Public Service](#)

shows that federal agencies will need to fill 193,000 mission-critical positions by 2009. (Mission-critical positions are those a federal agency identifies as essential to achieving its core functions). Unfortunately, the flow of talent stepping forward to replace these valuable federal employees continues to dwindle.

The Price-Shays bill would initiate a major recruitment effort to fill the needs of the services that Americans depend upon. The Roosevelt Scholars Act, named after the father of the modern civil service, Theodore Roosevelt, will (1) create an elite new scholarship program to fund graduate-level study in exchange for a civil service commitment in targeted, mission-critical occupational areas across the federal government; and (2) establish a Foundation to administer the application process, selection of scholars, and ongoing support activities associated with these scholarships.

"What we're dealing with is a crisis of capacity – the government's capacity to continue providing the services that Americans depend upon," said Rep. Price, who is co-chair of the Congressional Service Caucus. "In the face of a dwindling professional workforce, we must act now to recruit the scientists, engineers, and other high-level experts who make our government work. Our initiative would mobilize the country's colleges and universities to address this very acute challenge."

"As the cost of college and graduate studies escalate, we need to ensure public sector positions remain a viable option for our nation's best and brightest students," said Rep. Shays. "To attract tomorrow's leaders to public sector positions, we need to provide resources, like tuition assistance, in order for these jobs to compete with the salaries available to top-notch employees in the private sector. The Roosevelt Scholars program will create a new scholarship to fund graduate-level study in exchange for a federal service commitment in targeted, 'mission

critical' occupational areas across the federal government. I can't think of a better investment the federal government can make than in training and invigorating its future leaders."

The Roosevelt Scholars program would provide full tuition, support for room and board, and a stipend for graduate study. In exchange for this support, Roosevelt Scholars would complete an internship with a federal agency and, upon graduation, complete a minimum of three years of civil service.

Price and Shays added that the foundation and scholarship program would help restore prestige to civil service and turn the federal government into a place where the best and brightest go to make a difference.

[>> Read the legislation](#)

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